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FRIENDS OF THE EARTH-GHANA (FOE GHANA)

ENVIRONMENT IN GHANA - GOOD AND BAD PRACTICE NARRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORT (JUNE 1996 - JUNE 1998)

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NARRATIVE REPORT FOR JUNE 1996 - JUNE 1998

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This narrative report covers the activities done from June 1996 - June 1998 regarding the research project on Ghana's Environment. This report covers the following areas:

(The technical report is submitted under separate cover).

- a) Process activity
- b) Activities completed to date
- c) Narrative content
 - Synthesis
 - Research Problem
 - Research Findings
 - Fulfilment of Project Objectives
 - Project Design and Implementation
 - Project Output and Dissemination
 - Capacity Building
 - Project Management
 - Impact
 - Overall Assessment
- d) Financial report
- e) List of Researchers

1.1 The Process Activity:

The complex and interrelated nature of environmental problems in Ghana requires that a number of specialists be brought together to prepare background papers on the case studies according to detail briefing. These specialists were people who had a wide range of experience in the subject, understood local environmental issues and had a good understanding of the social cultural and political environment.

The briefing proposed guidelines on thematic areas of environmental concern to be written by the specialists, including methodology, and style of the report. For example, the terms of reference specifically stated the following key sentences:

- The need to identify the problems and the kind of measures that might be taken to overcome them.
- It should provide valuable examples and ideas for local authority, government and focus on specific examples which local people can relate to more easily.
- Socio-economic factors influencing the success stories should be investigated to see how this could serve as good examples for others to follow and where possible case studies should provide action programmes to solve specific problems with community involvement.
- The study should suggest various ways in which policy makers, organisations and communities as well as individuals can play a role in addressing the problem.

The criteria for the case studies were:

- a) There should be clear unambiguous lessons to be learnt from them
- b) The bad practice case studies should provide an insight into how and why failure occur and how they can be avoided.
- c) The good case study should provide examples that people can relate to and solutions that they can implement (ie. solutions that are local practical, replicable, socially acceptable and sustainable).
- d) Case studies should:
 - involve issues that are of concern to a majority of people living in both rural and urban areas
 - be geographically spread
 - be of interest to the general public, that are concerned about the deterioration of Ghana's environment.

1.2 Activities completed to date

- Identifying and organising the research team including detailed briefing and providing them with clear terms of reference for the study.
- Organising a workshop for briefing and training of the research team..
- Reconnaissance survey, introducing the research team or individuals to the relevant communities and institutions.
- Establishment of local research support teams in the case study areas to facilitate collection of data and indigenous knowledge.
- Secondary data and literature review have been completed in each of the case study themes.
- Field studies have been done and draft reports submitted to Friends of the Earth-Ghana.
- Data analysis and synthesis has been completed, including the drawing of some diagrams.
- Preparation of two technical reports (Full Report and Abridge Version), progress reports and also the financial report for the period June 1996 - June 1998.
- Local consultations and small workshop in resource dependent communities are ongoing, and also to discuss the findings of the report.

2.0 SYNTHESIS

The need to provide adequate information on a country's environment is central to her socio-economic development, yet this aspect of information dissemination is often neglected. This is so in Ghana (and most developing countries). To date, no official report on the State of the Environment (SOE) is produced by our national government.

Friends of the Earth - Ghana undertook this study on Ghana's environment using case studies. This has significant advantage over a formal State of the Environment Report, in that, it provides experience that people can easily relate to and curve responsibility for its solutions.

The objective of the project was to produce a document that accurately describes Ghana's environment, written in such a way as to be suitable for use by school pupils, teachers and the

general public who have an interest in learning about their environment.

The finished product contains 30 case studies - Identifying problems and demonstrating ways in which serious environmental damage can be avoided. It also has an Introductory Chapter which provides an overview of the macro level situation, to give the various case studies a good link. There are two reports - the Full Report of about 200 pages and the Abridge Version of about 85 pages. An initial 200 copies are provided to be distributed to all government ministries, local authorities, public libraries and schools.

The report being the first of its kind will provide a comprehensive document which will be extremely useful to researchers, policy people and the general public.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the research Project was to identify the key determinants of both successful and unsuccessful integrated environmental and natural resource policy, planning and management practices and to stimulate better practices through increased awareness, particularly at the community level.

The specific objectives of the project are as follows:

- a) to better understand, through participatory and action oriented research methods, the relationships among environmental degradation and socio-economic, cultural and in particular, institutional behaviour;
- b) to provide practical and applied information to communities, NGOs, policy-makers, planners and managers on the state of Ghana's environment and related policy, planning and management practices;
- c) to generate information on the environment and the related policy, planning and management practices that can be used in high school and college curriculum and to provide access to this information through a "state of the art" environmental education text; and
- d) to actively disseminate the findings of the research through a series of interactive environmental education workshops and exhibits.

The intention is to produce a document that accurately describes the state of Ghana's environment. It provides valuable examples and ideas for local authorities and government ministries. Indeed, the document was written in such a way that is suitable for use in high schools and colleges, and its even accessible to educated members of the general public who have an interest in learning more about their environment.

The report builds on the many reports on Ghana's environment that have already been produced. However, it involves fieldwork and is considerably further than those reports that have been done. By and large, these reports generalize the problems, rather than focussing on specific examples, which local people (and school children) can relate to more easily. Our report attempts to assess the scale of each problem, nationwide.

The socio-economic factors influencing the success stories has also been investigated to see how this could serve as good examples for others to follow, and where possible case studies that provides action programmes to solve specific problems with community involvement. Furthermore, the reactions and responses of people depending on the resource has been taken into consideration, and suggest various ways in which policy makers, organisations and communities as well as individuals can play a role in environmental sustainability. Other considerations are cultural and political factors influencing resource use. In addition to identifying key environmental problems and exploring their main causes, it also provides practical examples of how other communities with similar problems have been able to overcome them.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

Specialists in Ghana were invited to prepare background papers on the individual case studies according to a detailed briefing. The briefing specifies style, content, length, and technical level. Furthermore, there was a photographic library search and expedition that shows true and accurate pictures which reflect the situations on the ground.

The specialists are people who have a wide range of experience in the subject, understand local issues and have a good understanding of the socio-cultural and political environments.

Rural support teams were set up to assist the specialists with the collection of data and with the assessment of the extent of problems, locally and nationally. The view of people in industry, universities as well as the public sector, have also been sought.

2.3 EXPECTED BENEFITS

1. This report, being the first of its kind will provide a comprehensive document on case studies on Ghana's environment and will be extremely useful to researchers, government policy makers, the aid agencies and to the general public which have interest in the environment in general, as well as cooperate planners.
2. It will help fill the gaps in the environmental information situation, drawing from the perspective of a cross section of the Ghanaian population.
3. Environmental education will be greatly enhanced and individuals communities and other groups will be encouraged to take a more positive action towards protecting the environment.
4. Generally, it could help develop a framework for transforming environmental data into useful, practical, and popular text, that would enlist the needed public support for environmental policy in Ghana.
5. This report could be shared with other West African countries that have similar environmental problems and help promote networking of people working on similar issues.

3.0 RESEARCH PROBLEM

A number of environmental problems are common to developing countries, for example, poor air quality, especially around industrial complexes and in congested inner city areas, polluted water supplies, pesticide abuse, deforestation and soil erosion. And the problems seem to be getting worse, largely as a result of uncontrolled population growth and the need to service crippling foreign debt. Ghana is no exception. Indeed, pollution from industrial activity and domestic waste, and the destruction of natural forests, are of particular worry. Despite this, concern for the environment is still low on most people's list of priorities. An yet a healthy environment is a fundamental requirement for a healthy economy and a healthy population. Unfortunately, as in most developing countries, readily accessible information about the

environment is still not available. Indeed, to date no comprehensive analysis of the state of Ghana's environment has been published - a view endorsed by the recent country report by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED, 1992). We believe that Ghana needs a locally produced "State of the Environment Report", which includes sector by sector review. In absence of this, a case study approach from an NGO like Friends of the Earth will have a significant advantage and help fill the gap in environmental literature in Ghana.

If ordinary people are to fully appreciate just how their local environment is coming under threat, more information will need to be made available, and in a form to which local people can relate. Only in this way will the implications of current trends become clear and people begin to realise how their health, safety and job security could be adversely affected.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research reveals that Ghana's environment and all the resources that it contains is part of the nation's heritage which should be preserved for the enjoyment and the economic survival of present and future generations - we are surrounded every day by uses of our natural resources; agriculture is dependent on fertile soils, fish and bushmeat provide an important source of revenue and protein for many people in Ghana; forests provide a wealth of resources including timber, fuelwood, plant medicines and food in the form of snails and fruits and gold deposits are exported to provide foreign exchange.

These resources are provided by nature but should not be taken for granted as free and unending. Ghana's population has increased from 2 million people in 1921 to an estimated 18 million today. Added to the industrialisation and urban growth this has caused the environment to be under incredible strain. Ghana's environment is fragile and is under threat. The rapid exploitation of resources for socio-economic needs without sufficient thought to the environment has led to environmental problems such as massive deforestation (Ghana has all her primary forest), soil erosion, wildlife depletion and air and water pollution. This unsustainable use of the environment not only threatens the health of many Ghanaians but will also degrade these resources so that their benefits can not be enjoyed in the future.

Ghana has a tradition of conservation dating back to our ancestral period, for example the formation of Sacred Grove by village elders within nearby forests. Local people had only restricted access to these areas, if at all, and they were in the most part solely used for spiritual ceremonies. This effectively created a nature "reserve". Later, in colonial times, reserve areas such as Mole National Park were set aside for wildlife protection. However, as the pressure on the environment has increased in the latter part of this century emphasis has been placed on socio-economic needs, environment protection has become largely neglected.

Environmental management problems identified include:

- a) Inadequate action to integrate sustainable development issues in development planning practice beyond the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment statements prior to the initiation of new projects;
- b) Lack of effective policy framework and manpower resources for the sustainable development and management of human settlements (rural, urban and metropolitan) and the addressing of serious disparities between rural and urban areas;
- c) Inadequate documentation and data base in the area of environment and development on Ghana and the West African sub-region;
- d) Inadequate staffing of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as well as inadequate orientation of senior and middle level staff in these institutions for addressing current issues of environmental and sustainable development;
- e) Inadequate technical and manpower capability of the EPA to undertake monitoring and enforcement of environmental standards and guidelines nation-wide especially with reference to mining and industrial pollution;
- f) Inadequate legislative framework for regulating and enforcing environmental quality standards at national, regional and district levels.

In spite of the above, however, there are signs that at last the environment is being considered as an integral part of development plans. For example, in the new development policy framework, Vision 2020, environmental protection is seen as critical for development and is chosen as one of the country's eight development sectors. Also the formation of the

Environmental Protection Agency with its National Environmental Action Plan has made a considerable effort to co-ordinate and monitor environmental protection, though it is hampered by inadequate funding and man-power.

The country has also demonstrated her concern for the environment by the ratification of a number of Conventions and Treaties dealing with the environment, including the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat; Convention to Combat Desertification; Convention on Biological Diversity; and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

Other signs of hope come from the many examples of research and transfer of new environmentally friendly technologies to replace existing environmental degrading ones. Examples of the Appropriate Technologies have been developed by the Intermediate Technology Transfer Unit (ITTU) and similar organisations for use in medium and small scale industries. Other sectors which have benefited from the transfer of environmentally friendly appropriate technology include small scale agriculture and even the domestic household.

Therefore Ghana's long tradition of conservation continues. However, environmental management must become a priority in Ghana's development agenda. Implementing environmental management at the level required to adequately address the country's environmental problems, will require massive human effort, significant capital expenditure and co-ordinated action at all levels: local, regional and national. This is unavoidable, but then the benefits are indisputable.

5.0 FULFILMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the research was to identify key determinants of successful and unsuccessful integrated natural resource policy and to stimulate better practices through increase awareness, particularly at the local level. **This has been achieved through the dissemination of the reports at the district assembly level.**

One other key objective was to generate information on environment and related policy that can be used in high schools and colleges and to provide access to this information. **The abridge version of the report addresses this objective.**

6.0 PROJECT DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The project employed participatory rural appraisal methods. Various specialists were drawn from the NGO sector, government ministries, research institutions such as the Universities and development practitioners. Furthermore, local support teams who are suppose to be the beneficiaries of the project were invited to assist the specialists in data collection and assessing the extent of the problem and impact at the micro level. The concerns of gender were also well integrated into the project design by specifically addressing environmental concerns of men and women alike.

7.0 PROJECT OUTPUTS AND DISSEMINATION

Our report aims to be accessible to a wider cross-section of the general public. the report documents some of the major environmental concerns in Ghana today. We are interested in the environment in the broadest sense: the human environment of the village, town and city; the controlled environment of the farm and homestead; and the natural environment of the forest, savanna, lakes and coastal areas.

For each section there is a brief summary on the relevant theory but more detailed case studies are also provided to illustrate some of the good and bad practices for each issue. These are intended to show practices to be avoid and also some solutions to lessen any potential environmental impacts.

Recommendations are made that we feel would improve the situation if implemented. Many of these are aimed at policy makers and relevant organisations, both governmental and non-governmental. However, this does not exclude the role of the general public. Individuals can have a large part to play in the steps towards a more sustainable future for Ghana. Knowledge of the issues and potential ways forward is vital. Without pressure from society to do the environmentally responsible action then socio-economic forces and short term gain will get

priority. We must all be aware and responsible for the state of our own heritage.

Individuals can also change their own behaviour to reduce environmental degradation such as using an energy conserving stove. Additionally individuals can band together to form local environmental groups which can initiate projects such as planting trees, neighbourhood clean ups, recycling and even strengthen the campaign drive for environmentally responsible behaviour nationwide.

We hope that this report will empower people through knowledge to take responsibility in their own way for Ghana's environment.

- Information sharing and Dissemination:
200 copies of each of the two reports have been produced and circulated.
2 workshops and regional conferences have been organised to discuss the output
Arrangements are being made to put the summary of the report on our website
- Knowledge Creation:
The output will encourage the design of policies that integrate economic, social and ecological objectives.
The report will assist policy makers to design policies which minimise use of natural resources and as the same time maximise increase in prosperity.
- Training:
Various in-country consultations have been organised to discuss the outcome of the research.

8.0 CAPACITY BUILDING

Within Friends of the Earth, the staff involved with the research have gained considerable experience in participatory research, data collection and analysis.

Increase research and administrative skills of the researchers have been greatly enhanced.

Institutional reinforcement and increased capacity for project management have been realised.

9.0 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Administration: FOE-Ghana administrative capacity for project management has been greatly enhanced. This includes financial and personnel administration in respect to managing research projects.

10.0 IMPACT

The knowledge produced by compiling this research document will have considerable impact on policy formulation at the national, regional and local levels in Ghana. Specifically, the impact will be stronger at the district assembly level (local authority and municipalities). In Ghana, the decentralised political structure gives greater decision making autonomy at the local level.

It is expected that people who read this report will contribute to finding lasting solutions to environmental problems in Ghana. There is no better way to impact people's attitudes and behaviour than through detailed case studies which discuss people, places and events that local people understand and can relate to.

11.0 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This output constitutes a major product in environmental information sector. The value of this report will go a long way to stimulate environmental conservation and provide the necessary ingredients for policy makers to integrate economic, social and environmental objectives. By so doing, long term economic benefits will be greater than cost to society.